



Assessment Profile for the Alternate Montana Science Assessment

Why:

Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA) is the alternate science assessment for academic state achievement reporting in Grades 5, 8, and 11 for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The AMSA is designed to measure the alternate academic achievement standards aligned to Montana's Content Standards in science (2016). The AMSA is the alternate version provided in place of the general Montana Science Assessment and the ACT test for students with significant cognitive disabilities. It is used to provide state, district, school, and individual student achievement information on the state-adopted content standards in science. It is used by the state to provide a consistent picture of student performance and proficiency across Montana's public schools and private schools seeking accreditation. It is an important measure for understanding comparisons between schools, over time, and for gaining understanding of equity in educational services.

State Requirement:

- "Science assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards for science and administered in grades 5, 8, and 11."

Source: [ARM 10.56.102\(3\)\(b\)](#)

Federal Requirement:

- "In the case of science, be administered not less than one time during— (aa) grades 3 through 5; (bb) grades 6 through 9; and (cc) grades 10 through 12."

Source: [ESEA Section 1111\(b\)\(2\)\(B\)\(v\)\(II\)](#)

What:

Student performance within Montana's accountability system will use results from this assessment for grades 5 and 8 to calculate the K–8 Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) indicator.

This assessment contains many built-in supports that allow students to use materials they are most familiar with and communicate what they know and can do as independently as possible. The assessment is computer based with multiple options for student interaction.

Students eligible to participate in alternate assessments make up approximately 1% of the total student population. The decision to move a special education student to an alternate assessment has significant implications for the path that a student will take in their K–12 school career. It means the student is not able to participate in the general education curriculum even when provided with accommodations. A student who participates in alternate assessment requires a modified curriculum. See [Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments](#) document.

Who:

Montana belongs to a state-led science alternate item collaborative along with six other states: Hawaii, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming. This assessment is required in all public schools and accredited private schools. This 2022–2023 school year Montana has around 835 schools with students in the tested grades. Annually, roughly 350 Montana students are assessed using this



summative measure in the tested grades. All district System Test Coordinators (STCs) will be assigned a district user role in Cambium’s TIDE portal. The STC is responsible for creating all other user roles within the district. A newly created user will receive an email from the TIDE system with a link and first-time log-in credentials. Prior to being able to administer or access either the interim or summative assessments, each individual user must complete the 20-minute Test Administrator Certification course in the Cambium portal.

The OPI uploads students into TIDE twice a week from August through March using the data as it is entered into the local student data system (Infinite Campus/PowerSchool). Daily uploads will be conducted for the duration of the summative assessment window. To ensure that student accommodations are available, IEP’s must be entered in the local data system. If a student moves out of district, the district should ensure that the student is end-dated at said district, in order to allow the student to enroll in another school system within the state and participate in the statewide required assessment.

When:

This state summative assessment has a seven-week test window that starts in March each year. This 2022–2023 school year it is open from March 13 to April 28, 2023.

Average Testing Times	
Science	1–2 hours
Total	2 hours

Where:

The test is administered online via the [Cambium Testing Portal](#) and is adaptive.

Cost:

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) contracts directly with Cambium Assessment for design, development, and test delivery services for the summative science assessment. Annually, these costs are roughly \$2,000 per student.

Score Reports: Accessing, Downloading & Providing To Families

Students and teachers receive their results ten days after the last student in the district who is eligible to test completes and submits their test, or ten days after the assessment window closes, whichever comes first. District, school, class, and individual student reports are all available in the Reporting System within the Cambium portal.

Districts are responsible for downloading individual student score reports, printing them, and providing them to parents alongside an accompanying parent letter with resources no later than Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall. With the reduced turn-around time for student reports, districts are encouraged to wait until after the summative testing window has closed before printing individual student reports. Districts are also encouraged to provide the reports to parents prior to the end of the school year.

For state official reporting purposes, the OPI receives the raw results file in early July each year and typically releases the official results to the public in mid-September.

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STATE OF MONTANA

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Where Do I Find More Information or Ask Additional Questions?

Questions about this assessment should be directed to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569, or e-mail us at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov. You can explore additional resources and materials for this assessment at the [OPI Statewide Testing Page](#) or [Science Development Site](#).